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Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 97: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/49/38 (Supplement No. 38), A/49/176, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, A/49/217-E/1994/103, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/308, A/49/314 and Corr.1, A/49/327 and Corr.1, A/49/349, A/49/354, A/49/365-E/1994/119, A/49/378, A/49/381, A/49/462 and Corr.1, A/49/506, A/49/532, A/49/537 and Corr.1; A/C.3/49/13)

1. Mr. HOUANSOU (Benin) said that his country was making efforts to promote the advancement of women and had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the various international human rights instruments. In Benin, women employed in the government, education and health sectors earned equal pay with men and there were a number of women in ministerial and parliamentary posts. However, further efforts were needed and he therefore welcomed the fact that more importance was being accorded to women's issues in the work and conferences of the United Nations.

2. Women were central to development and peace and their knowledge of natural resources management and conservation was invaluable. It was therefore regrettable that conditions were not conducive to their full and effective contribution to sustainable development. Poverty and discrimination, as well as unequal access to education, the means of production and employment, impeded their advancement and social integration, particularly in developing countries. The issues of poverty and education should therefore be central to discussions at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Such discussions must be followed by action, however, otherwise women would never emerge from their isolation. The Conference should therefore focus on defining practical measures for the implementation of its Platform for Action and on securing the corresponding funding. Governments would also have to invest in women by adopting and implementing legislation that encouraged their full participation in the development process, and the media had an essential role to play in promoting a positive image of women.

3. The debt burden of the developing countries had an adverse effect on their social budgets and consequently, on the advancement of women. The Bretton Woods institutions should take a more humane approach by giving greater consideration to the social aspects of development and by redefining economic growth. Measures for the advancement of women should therefore include debt cancellation, reduction or rescheduling for at least the African countries and the least developed countries. The latest Uruguay Round agreements should also be amended to benefit women in those countries, while the developed countries should meet the target set for official development assistance.

4. Since the United Nations must play a leading role in the advancement of women, the Department of Public Information should intensify its already appreciable efforts by disseminating in the official languages information that presented women in a new light.

5. Benin supported the proposal to amend article 20 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to allow more time for the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the cooperation between the various United Nations agencies and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

6. Mr. OULD MOHAMED LEMINE (Mauritania) commended the work and achievements of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had made a major contribution towards eliminating discrimination against women and improving their legal, economic, social and political status. Both traditionally and institutionally, women suffered from exploitation, social marginalization and economic oppression. The benefit of equal rights and opportunities would enable them to realize their potential and contribute fully to all aspects of development, thereby harnessing a precious human resource which was often wasted.

7. The Fourth World Conference on Women must finally remove all the obstacles that had so far impeded the advancement of women, as well as determine ways of accelerating progress in that regard. As agents of development, women should participate fully in the formulation and implementation of development plans at all levels, while as its beneficiaries, they should have access to social services, credit, land and other productive resources. In that connection, education was the basis for enhancing both the status of women and the overall well-being of society.

8. In the developing countries, women's problems were exacerbated by the prevailing international economic climate and the debt burden, which reduced the resources available for social programmes, raised the prices of basic necessities and limited access to education, health and employment. In some countries, drought, desertification, armed conflict and other emergency situations were causing rural women to migrate to urban areas, where their living conditions were no less wretched and they were often their family's sole breadwinner, a situation that would have serious repercussions for future generations.

9. The Fourth World Conference on Women should address all those issues and lay the foundations for a life of dignity, freedom, justice and prosperity for all. Action must be taken to ensure that women's equality under the law became a practical reality. Their needs could not be met without development, however, which was also the firmest guarantee of peace. War and conflict diverted human and financial resources from efforts to promote the well-being of the whole of society, including women and other vulnerable groups. The Fourth World Conference on Women would be judged on its response to all those challenges.

10. Mrs. TRAORÉ (Mali) shared the view that development and economic growth were indissolubly linked to the advancement of women. The World Summit for Social Development should permit the adoption of measures to improve the difficult situation of women in the least developed countries, where rural women in particular were living in acute poverty because of their limited access to the means of production and to decision-making. Such measures should be guided

by the conclusions of the World Conference on Human Rights, which had urged Governments and the United Nations to give priority to ensuring that women enjoyed all fundamental rights on an equal footing with men.

11. Despite its economic difficulties, her Government had itself set the goal of removing obstacles to the advancement of women and to their full participation in the development process. It had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, in 1993, had established a variety of official mechanisms charged with formulating a strategy for the advancement of women and coordinating the activities of those involved in its implementation.

12. The full and effective participation of women in the development process would not be achieved, however, unless they received a minimum education. Education was a major concern for her country, and some success had been achieved in reducing the illiteracy rate. However, the lack of resources meant that the overall rate of school attendance was low, and particularly so among girls for a variety of socio-cultural, economic and institutional reasons. With the help of outside agencies, numerous projects were being implemented to address that problem, including a five-year national plan of action which aimed not only to ensure the mass education of girls, but also to offer girls and women technical and vocational training to enhance their participation in development.

13. In the health area, her Government had adopted programmes aimed at providing maternal and child health care and family planning, combating disease and improving environmental health.

14. Women in Mali were extremely active as wage-earners, self-employed workers and entrepreneurs in all sectors of the urban and rural economy. They had also played an important role in the country's struggle for freedom and justice. Following the establishment of democracy in 1991, numerous women's associations had emerged which were now working to improve the living conditions of rural and urban women. Her delegation hoped that the Fourth World Conference on Women would provide an opportunity to reaffirm the central role of women in society and development and to translate policies for women into actual programmes.

15. Mr. PACE (Malta) said that, while the advancement of women was integral to social development, it would be a mistake to consider the empowerment of women solely in terms of social development. Women's participation in the building of a dignified society was of intrinsic value. Their empowerment depended on the commitment of society at large and his country had, in recent years, set up mechanisms to consolidate effective equality of the sexes. Activities in Malta focused on legal reforms and on positive measures to promote a culture favourable to the advancement of women, particularly in education and employment. The legal situation with regard to equal rights for women and men was in some respects more advanced than in the European Union.

16. His country had ratified United Nations, International Labour Organization and Council of Europe conventions on women's rights. Its Constitution provided

legal redress against sex discrimination and both spouses in a marriage, whether Maltese or foreign, had equal rights and responsibilities. Education was compulsory for boys and girls from ages 5 to 16 and tertiary-level students received stipends. Male and female employees enjoyed parity of wages and there were special provisions for pregnancy and maternity leave. Free child-care services had been introduced to facilitate women's participation in the workplace without undermining their role as mothers.

17. Problems persisted, nevertheless, and there had been campaigns to foster awareness among women of their rights on such issues as violence and harassment, conditions at work, participation and decision-making in public life and gender equality. A section within the police force, headed by a female police inspector, and a special action team had been set up to investigate violence against women, and programmes to integrate government and voluntary action in that field were being developed.

18. Despite the deserved prominence given at recent conferences to the role of women in social development, statistics revealed the obstacles yet to be overcome: families headed by women alone were, in the main, poor and lacked access to economic resources and legal protection. In many countries, women were still paid less than men for the same work or were not remunerated at all, and their household work was undervalued. Two thirds of the illiterate population of the world were women. Similarly, there was a very low proportion world wide of female heads of Government, members of Parliament, heads of United Nations specialized agencies and ambassadors to the United Nations.

19. Too many areas of social and economic life were still male-dominated. While legislation could stipulate equal rights, true empowerment would be when all women enjoyed the right to vote and when the millions of women living with dependent children in squalid conditions gained access to the fundamentals of a civilized life.

20. Mr. SOTIROV (Bulgaria) said that taking practical measures for the elimination of discrimination against women and of gender-based stereotypes required that the issues of the equal status and human rights of women be integrated into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activities. In that regard, the role of the focal points for women's human rights in the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women should be further developed and enhanced. While he welcomed the growing number of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, he noted that the workload of its monitoring Committee had become unmanageable as a result. He therefore supported the request that the General Assembly review the matter. He also appreciated the decision by the Commission on the Status of Women to examine the question of an optional protocol to the Convention providing a right of petition, and hailed the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the creation of a post of Special Rapporteur on violence against women as milestones in the protection of women's human rights.

21. With regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women, his delegation considered that the draft Platform for Action needed to be developed further to take account of the discussions of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the results of the regional preparatory meetings. The European regional conference, for example, had paid particular attention to women's situation under conditions of macroeconomic change and structural adjustment in countries in transition. One major explicit element of the Platform should be the human rights of women, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Another was the question of women's equal participation in decision-making, for women were not and should not be passive beneficiaries of programmes designed in their favour. The Platform for Action should also contain recommendations in response to the dynamic changes taking place in economic and social structures, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Lastly, in formulating that document account should be taken of the outcomes of both the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development.

22. Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that, despite dedicated efforts to remove obstacles to the advancement of women, the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies remained unsatisfactory as a result of turmoil in some regions, the worsening economic situation in developing countries and the widening gap between North and South. The Fourth World Conference on Women, by reviewing the implementation of the strategies and formulating a Platform for Action to accelerate their implementation, would consequently have far-reaching significance. Thorough preparation would be the key to its success. His country had participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Conference, held at Jakarta. The Declaration adopted at that meeting, together with the other regional plans of action, would be a major input to the Platform for Action for the World Conference. The goals of equality, development and peace, set out in the Nairobi Strategies, remained valid and should be incorporated into the Platform for Action together with the demands of women in developing countries, who constituted the overwhelming majority of women in the world.

23. His Government had always encouraged women's full participation in political decision-making and in social and economic development. Legislation to safeguard their rights and interests and coordination of women's affairs had gradually improved. Not only women's employment but also their participation in decision-making and management were increasing, and their living conditions, health and education had improved considerably. China had the largest number of women in the world and their advancement would contribute to the advancement of women everywhere.

24. As host to the Fourth World Conference on Women, his Government attached great importance to the preparations for it. Under the conference organizing committee, work had gone well and the purposes and significance of the Conference had been publicized widely. The Nairobi Strategies had been published for general readers and the country's largest newspaper had carried the entire text of a national report on their implementation in China. There was an enormous interest and sense of participation in the Conference at all levels. Cooperative relations with the United Nations had been excellent and

fruitful discussions had been held on all aspects of the Conference. The people of China wanted the Conference to bear fruit so that the women of the world could truly "hold up half the sky".

25. Ms. FRASER (United States of America) said that the United States Department of Labor and State Department had recently sponsored 10 national preparatory meetings for the Beijing Conference, attended by over 5,500 women of all races, ages, income levels, ethnic groups, religions and political persuasions. The purpose of the meetings had been to inform interested citizens about the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women and to elicit information about the status of women in the United States and the concerns of activist women and non-governmental organizations. Untold numbers of other meetings relating to the Beijing Conference were being organized independently throughout the country, demonstrating that interest in the Conference among women in the United States was great and increasing.

26. Although priorities varied from region to region, the issues of concern for women tended to be the same: The feminization of poverty, women's economic status, women's legal status and human rights, women's participation in decision-making and political and economic power, and family responsibilities. Concern had also been expressed about education and training, with special emphasis on the education of girls, women and the environment, and health and reproductive rights. There was also great interest in the collection of gender-based statistics and their use in policy formulation and programme design.

27. Every region had expressed concern about vulnerable, disadvantaged and other groups of women, such as women heads of household, disabled and elderly women, refugee and migrant women, and young women. There was unanimity on the question of violence against women and a new determination among women to be seen not as victims, but as decisive, active human beings ready to take action for their own welfare and that of the world.

28. In analysing the documents from the various regions, her delegation had found consistent references to lack of recognition of women's unremunerated work, democratization, and women's awareness of their human rights. Emphasis had also been placed on academic research into gender relations; using women's organizations for education information and communication activities; and the impact on women of social spending cuts. The meetings held in the United States had dealt with some of the same issues and put forward similar action strategies. Care must be taken to ensure that the draft Platform for Action for the Beijing Conference was action-oriented. Consideration should be given to appending to it a declaration highlighting the major issues and calling on Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and individuals to address those issues and implement the Platform. In that connection, she stressed that individuals should be urged to put human rights principles into practice in their daily lives, both as citizens and within their own families, in order to supplement the action taken by Governments and non-governmental organizations. In all communities, there were women who stood up for their rights and the rights of others or suggested practical action to advance the

status of women. It was high time that such women were recognized as examples of what women themselves could do in that area. Taking responsibility for one's own future was the essence of citizenship. Only by taking a grass-roots approach would it be possible to make the twenty-first century one of equality for women and men.

29. Mr. DUONG CHI DUNG (Viet Nam) said that much remained to be done to achieve the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The international community should continue its efforts and take effective measures to remove obstacles to the advancement of women in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres so as to enable them to participate equally in the development process. Women, as both agents and beneficiaries of development, must be fully involved in policy formulation, planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels. Efforts to promote the advancement of women should be combined with those to maintain peace and foster economic development and social progress.

30. In Viet Nam, women were playing an increasing role in the process of reforming and renewing the country and were an important force for social and economic development. His Government attached great importance to the advancement of Vietnamese women and adhered to the principle of equality between the sexes in political, economic, social and cultural life, enabling women to participate more actively in the management of State affairs, economic, scientific and technological development and social progress. Viet Nam had adopted a national strategy for the advancement of women to the year 2000 and was striving to establish favourable conditions for achieving equality between men and women and improving the quality of women's lives. The national strategy was designed specifically to provide training and jobs for women, improve the health conditions of women and children, create happy families, combat social ills such as drug addiction and prostitution, improve housing and environmental conditions, and strengthen national organizations for the advancement of women.

31. His Government greatly appreciated the international assistance extended to Viet Nam, particularly through the United Nations. The activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) were particularly useful, since they focused on women's economic roles in the process of economic renewal. His delegation therefore encouraged the Organization to strengthen the Fund's capacity to carry out its work.

32. Viet Nam welcomed the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which should evaluate the progress achieved and identify the obstacles encountered in order to give new momentum to future global action for the advancement of women. The success of the Conference would depend to a large extent on the quality of the preparatory process, which required coordinated action at all levels. In that regard, he commended the efforts made by the Division for the Advancement of Women and stressed that preparations at the regional and national level were of crucial importance. The regional preparatory conferences would promote regional and international cooperation for enhancing the role of women in development.

33. The Platform for Action to be adopted at the Conference should be concise and action-oriented, with clearly defined objectives, and should build on the results of other recent world conferences. It should reflect common global concerns while taking account of the diversity of situations existing within and among countries and regions. It should focus on ways of removing obstacles to the advancement of women and set quantitative goals to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Sound financial arrangements and commitments must be made to ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the Platform.

34. His Government had spared no effort in preparing for the Conference at the national and local levels. As part of that effort, it had established a National Committee for the Advancement of Women to coordinate all activities relating to the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and the holding of the Conference.

35. Mrs. RADUCHOWSKA-BROCHWICZ (Poland) said that her country supported the priority given to the advancement and status of women in all areas and felt that the Fourth World Conference on Women would be an appropriate occasion to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Women's issues were closely linked to all social, economic and political matters and should be treated as an integral component of all strategies and activities. Countries still had a great need for information, training, advisory services and other forms of support to facilitate the sharing of experience and ideas for close cooperation among Governments, international bodies and non-governmental organizations.

36. The transition to a democratic system and a market economy had had a profound impact on women in Poland. Its negative effects included massive female unemployment and social spending cuts, which had affected incomes and living standards. On the other hand, women's entrepreneurship had expanded dramatically, although maintaining that positive trend required governmental and social support and the development of an appropriate approach reflected in legislation and practice. The contribution made by women working in the informal sector and at home also needed to be sufficiently recognized and taken into account in formulating economic and social policies.

37. As in most countries, there was still a gap between the de jure and the de facto implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in Poland. Moreover, transformation of the political system had required the revision of legislation and the introduction of new regulations. Women were still underrepresented in ministerial posts and in executive bodies at the provincial and municipal levels, and remained in a minority in senior management positions in public administration, the manufacturing and banking sectors, trade unions and employers' organizations. There were fewer women in elected political positions than there had been in the Communist period but the women now being elected were better able tó compete and work as skilled partners with male politicians and were aware that they had to unite to defend their basic rights and interests. The establishment of the Parliamentary Women's Group and the

development of various women's organizations were examples of that awareness. In virtually every area of development, the role of women was central.

38. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/49/38) and noted with satisfaction that the number of States parties to the Convention had increased. Poland urged those States which had not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention and, sharing the concern expressed about the backlog of reports, supported the Economic and Social Council recommendation that three weeks should be allocated for the Committee's sessions until the backlog was eliminated.

39. Lastly, she stressed the importance that Poland attached to improving the status of women in the Secretariat. A visible commitment by the Secretary-General was essential in that regard and she hoped that he would include women in future appointments to senior posts.

40. Mrs. CAMARA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that preparations in the African region for the Fourth World Conference on Women had culminated in the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women, held recently at Dakar. The regional platform for action adopted by the Conference was based on a variety of inputs, including special reports on priority issues, national reports and contributions from non-governmental organizations.

41. It was clear from a comparison of the regional platforms for action that women in the North and the South shared the same problems, the only difference being the level of priority accorded to them. The 11 main areas of concern listed in the African platform for action included widespread poverty among women which was often aggravated by armed conflict; women's lack of access to education and health and to economic and political power; harmful traditional and religious practices; and the situation of girl children.

42. The African regional platform for action would be implemented by existing mechanisms. However, in view of the enormity of the task, greater human and financial resources might be required to ensure proper follow-up. Valuable inputs were expected from UNIFEM AND INSTRAW in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, and from specialized agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in their respective areas of expertise.

43. In order to speed up the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, Member States and development partners must undertake to mobilize the requisite resources. An increase in official development assistance and the rescheduling or cancellation of public debt were proposals that warranted consideration.

44. It must be recognized that the advancement of women was closely linked to social development. Final documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development had highlighted the important role played by women in protecting the environment and in implementing population policies. However, women could

realize their full potential only if they were able to exercise all the human rights mentioned in the Vienna Declaration. The African women attending the Dakar conference had pledged to fight for equality, development and peace. They have rejected violence in all its forms and called for greater participation by women in the regional and international peace process. They had reaffirmed their right to share political and economic power with men, but the idea of equality must be inculcated in society as a whole in order to achieve those ends.

45. The participation of African women in economic development must be recognized and better structured. Women were organizing themselves into cooperatives and associations in order to reap greater benefits from their often arduous work. Overall, the Dakar conference augured well for the resolution of Africa's difficulties, provided that the human rights and the role of women were duly recognized.

46. Mr. DLAMINI (Swaziland) said that his Government had set up a national steering committee on women's affairs to study the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with a view to its ratification. That committee was also responsible for formulating a national policy on women so that appropriate machinery would eventually be put in place. To encourage the participation of women in major decision-making, the national steering committee was also involved in efforts to restructure the economy which would culminate in the formulation of a long-term national development strategy in the spirit of the International Conference on Population and Development. Swaziland's national legislation would have to be brought into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. For instance, under article 16, States parties must legislate on issues affecting families, while in Swaziland such matters were traditionally decided within the family - the basic unit of society which shaped the attitudes of future generations.

47. It was imperative that his Government treat women as central to national development and stability. Quite apart from the fact that women accounted for 53 per cent of the total population and were responsible for the welfare of future generations, recent statistics pointed to a sizeable number of female-headed households in Swaziland, as single parenthood and divorce rates rose. Under national legislation, children were placed in the custody of the mother in the case of divorce or separation.

48. Swaziland was doing its utmost to improve the status of women and learn from the experience of other countries. There were no gender restrictions on applying for employment and the Government was doing everything in its power to appoint women to policy-making bodies, in accordance with article 7 of the Convention. Many women in Swaziland held senior posts in the diplomatic service, higher education and the legislature.

49. His country welcomed the contribution made by international donors and UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to women's projects in Swaziland. The Government itself had established a number of financial

assistance programmes that had greatly enhanced women's involvement in business activities. Most small- and medium-scale enterprises were owned and managed by women, and the creation of a revolving loan fund was expected to accelerate that momentum.

50. Women's health and safety were a major priority for his Government. Laws were being continuously updated to protect rape victims and punish offenders. Government employees were entitled to three months' paid maternity leave, while other workers were granted at least one month. Ninety-seven per cent of women attended prenatal clinics and most births took place in health facilities. In cooperation with WHO and other organizations, the Government was planning to launch a safe motherhood initiative in 1995.

51. Swaziland had ratified a number of international instruments similar in content to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The fact that it had not yet ratified the Convention did not mean that it was not taking positive action with regard to women. A number of problems had to be solved before it could ensure full compliance with the Convention.

52. Mr. SYROGIANIS CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the recent structural and policy reforms introduced in FAO would reflect the central role of rural women in fulfilling the organizations's two main objectives: promotion of food security and implementation of Agenda 21. As a result of restructuring, the service dealing with the role of women in agricultural production and rural development had become a division within the new Department for Sustainable Development. That Department was responsible for the social, economic, technical and ecological aspects of sustainable development, as well as for the internal coordination of different intersectoral matters such as women's participation in development. FAO had also revised its plan of action for the integration of women in development, adjusting priorities for the period 1996-2001. Lastly, the Director-General had underlined the importance of increasing the number of women holding senior posts in the organization.

53. FAO had participated actively in preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, its main objective being to ensure that the needs and interests of rural women were given special attention at the national, regional and international levels, as well as in the Platform for Action to be adopted by the Conference. It was necessary to promote the development of disadvantaged rural women. Their role in agriculture and in the family meant that they must be viewed as central agents of food security, sustainable development, natural resources management and environmental protection. FAO had helped the Conference secretariat to ensure that such issues were addressed in the Platform for Action, stressing the importance of a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to sustainable development. In particular, FAO wished emphasis to be placed on Agenda 21 and the role of women in environmental management and in agricultural production, forestry and fisheries. The strategic objectives of the Platform for Action should focus on strengthening women's productive capacities by giving them greater access to land, modern technology, support

services and marketing channels, as well as due recognition of their inherent skills.

54. Apart from activities relating to the Platform for Action, FAO preparations for the Beijing Conference had included direct assistance to Member States in incorporating the interests of rural women into their national reports for the Conference; a campaign to publicize the basic problems affecting rural women; and implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the FAO plan of action on the integration of women in development. With regard to the latter, its activities were geared, inter alia, towards giving women greater access to the means of production, strengthening national mechanisms for women's participation in development, and the collection and dissemination of gender-based agricultural data.

55. In cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an innovative, interdisciplinary programme of socio-economic gender analysis was being developed, which was to be tested in 1995 as a regional training programme for instructors.

56. While he welcomed the incorporation into the Platform for Action of issues relating to the participation of rural women in natural resources management and environmental protection, he suggested that more specific, targeted policies be included in the Platform and at the national level, with a view to facilitating women's roles in those areas. Rural women were among the most disadvantaged population groups and he hoped that their needs would be reflected in the conclusions of the Beijing Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.